



# Valuing Diversity



## It's Every Woman's Job

Eliminating racism is a priority and the responsibility of every member of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Racism is not just a matter of individual attitudes. It is an institutionalized system of power and control over people of racial and ethnic diversity in this society.

Racism and sexism are the "double whammy" that stands in the way of empowerment for women of racial and ethnic diversity in the United States and in many other parts of the world.

NOW members work to eliminate racism by lobbying legislators, sponsoring educational programs, organizing consciousness raising groups and taking direct action.

NOW focuses on the needs of women of racial and ethnic diversity through projects on:

### **Education**

NOW has long been in the forefront of the struggle for equal educational opportunities for women. Education is a vital tool to break the poverty trap. That's why the restoration of Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, a law prohibiting sex discrimination, was a priority and why strengthening Title IX enforcement remains a priority.

### **Employment**

The majority of women of racial and ethnic diversity are segregated into low-paying jobs and are disproportionately represented among the working poor. In 1986, women of racial and ethnic diversity were paid on the average less than 59 cents for every dollar men were paid. NOW is committed to eliminating job segregation, to fighting for pay equity in the marketplace and to increasing the minimum wage for the working poor in the United States.

---

---

## Reproductive Rights

Reproductive freedom is basic to the empowerment of all women. NOW opposes sterilization abuse and laws limiting young women's right to abortion; works to reduce teenage pregnancy by promoting school-based health clinics and the availability of other family planning information for young women; takes on the anti-abortion zealots in the courts and at the clinics which primarily serve low-income women; and lobbies for legislation increasing health access for women.

## Feminization of Poverty

Many experts predict that by the year 2000 women and children will make up nearly 100 percent of this nation's poor. NOW recognizes that women of racial and ethnic diversity, again, are disproportionately represented among those forced to live in poverty. NOW fights for the restoration of federal funding for programs that benefit women and children, for national health care, for an end to discrimination in housing, for an adequate supply of housing, for publicly-funded child care, Family and Medical Leave, and against "workfare" that penalizes poor women.

## Racial Diversity in NOW

Since its founding in 1966, NOW has benefited from the courageous leadership of many women of racial and ethnic diversity. The late Rev. Pauli Murray, an African American woman and Episcopal minister, was one of the founders of NOW and co-authored NOW's Statement of Purpose. In 1971, Aileen Hernandez, an African American woman succeeded Betty Friedan as the second President of NOW. In 1973, NOW established its first Task Force on Minority Women and, today, nearly one-third of the National Board of Directors are women of racial and ethnic diversity. NOW's National Bylaws include affirmative action provisions for the Board, and for all NOW state organi-

zations and Chapters. In addition, NOW follows affirmative action policies in employment at the National Action Center. Women of racial and ethnic diversity are leaders at every level of NOW, and NOW is strengthened as a result.

## Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee

This committee implements NOW's commitment to achieve civil rights and to repeal racist laws and practices. The committee is multi-cultural and of various ethnic and racial backgrounds. NOW's Board members serve with grassroots activists to recommend and to advise on NOW's program to eliminate racism.

## Political Action

NOW's political action committees — NOW/PAC for federal elections and NOW/Equality/PAC for state-level elections — have helped make a difference in the number of racially and ethnically diverse women who hold public office in our nation. While both PACs endorse men on occasion, women candidates are our first priority, along with increasing racial and ethnic diversity in Congress and state legislatures.

## Racial and Ethnic Diversity Program

In 1980, NOW established a Director of Women of Color Program position to address the special concerns of women of color. Today the Racial and Ethnic Diversity program provides eliminating racism materials, initiates coalition efforts with organizations for women of racial and ethnic diversity and advises NOW chapters on how to build coalitions at the local level. The program also helps organize national and regional events that focus on issues of concern to women of racial and ethnic diversity. The director of this program advises the Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee and helps NOW chapters carry out local actions to increase the diversity of NOW's issues and membership.

---



## YOU Should Join NOW

NOW has been a leader in the struggle for civil rights since its inception in 1966. Since then NOW has:

- Lobbied for Fair Housing, Voting Rights and Civil Rights acts, an increased minimum wage, and opposed "workfare" and other punitive "welfare reform" proposals.
- Supports efforts of immigrant women in their struggle against repressive legislation and regulations.
- Sponsored a National Conference of Women of Color in 1987; co-sponsored regional forums on Women of Color and Reproductive Rights.
- Supported Jesse Jackson's minority planks at the 1984 and 1988 Democratic conventions calling for strong affirmative action commitments and to reform party rules towards achieving gender, racial and ethnic parity.
- Joined boycotts called by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Free South Africa Movement protesting apartheid in South Africa.
- Organized for the memorial marches to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1983 and 1988.
- Joined boycotts in support of the poultry workers, United Farm Workers and the Mexican-American women who face substandard working conditions.
- Joined demonstrations protesting the verdict and the Justice Department's handling of the Rodney King brutality case.
- Joined with indigenous people to support Native American rights regarding issues such as funding for services, health care and control of reservation lands.

NOW has gone beyond the issues that face all women and has addressed many issues that are of particular importance to women of color. We need more women of racial and ethnic diversity in NOW as activists and as leaders. We need your involvement to turn the Feminization of Poverty into the Feminization of Power.

### Yes, I want to help eliminate racism.

You can make a difference. Join NOW and become part of the growing majority that understands the need for full equality for all women ... and is doing something to make it reality!

### Membership Application

First Name

Last Name

Address

City

State

Zip

( )

( )

Day Phone

Evening Phone

Regular National, State and Local Dues \$35\*

Sliding scale reduced dues for those unable to pay the full amount: \$15 to \$34

\*Note: Regular dues are \$40, in AZ, CA, IL, NY and MI

Please indicate if you would like to be affiliated with a local chapter at no additional charge (there may be a chapter shown in the box below) or if you would like to start a chapter in your area:

Mail your dues check (payable to NOW) to the chapter or state address in the box below, or if no address is shown to NOW, P.O. Box 96824, Washington, DC 20090-6824. To join by credit card, call NOW at (202) 331-0066. TTY (202) 331-9002.